FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Newport-Mesa Unified School District Recognizes Teachers of the Years

Newport-Mesa Unified School District (NMUSD) and the Newport-Mesa Federation of Teachers (NMFT) are pleased to announce the selection of Mrs. Jackie Wiseman, fifth grade teacher at Kaiser Elementary and Mr. Jim Blackie, eight grade science teacher at Ensign Intermediate, as the 2016 Teachers of the Year.

Mrs. Jackie Wiseman, Kaiser Elementary

Mrs. Wiseman is a seasoned professional entering her 48th year as a teacher. She began her career in NMUSD in 1969, having taught at Corona Del Mar Elementary (now closed), Andersen Elementary and now serves as a fifth grade teacher at Kaiser Elementary. She also served 20 years as a Teacher on Special Assignment, focused on staff development. Some of her responsibilities included seminars elements of effective instruction, classroom management, clinical supervision and other peer coaching strategies.

“As teachers we get to work with the most incredible creation in the universe: the mind. I hope I have done the job well, and that the precious mind and spirit of each of my students has been safe in my hands,” said Mrs. Wiseman.

In addition to being a seasoned educator, Mrs. Wiseman is a product of NMUSD, having attended Newport Elementary, Ensign Intermediate and Newport Harbor High School.

“Congratulations Mrs. Wiseman! We are extremely grateful for your genuine passion, dedication and overall positive approach to teaching," said Superintendent Dr. Fred Navarro.

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Mr. Jim Blackie, Ensign Intermediate

Mr. Jim Blackie is a veteran teacher who has worked at Ensign Intermediate School for 14 years. He is currently an eighth grade science teacher who is known for his engaging approach to education. He inspires students to seek new and creative ways to approach learning and solve problems. His students are exposed to thought-provoking science lab activities, and asked to examine and analyze their observations at a very high level.

In addition to his role as a science teacher, Mr. Blackie also serves as club advisor for the Ensign Debate Team and the Ensign Fellowship of Christian Athletes Club.

“Mr. Blackie’s genuine character and high moral standards earn him the respect of both teachers and students and he possesses a keen sense of purpose in his work,” said Ensign Principal Michael Sciacca.

His skills also have allowed him to begin the transition process to the Next Generation Science Standards. He has been able to effectively manage varying perspectives and personalities within his department to ensure a collective commitment to the new standards.

“These two amazing people serve as inspiration to their peers, and hundreds of students,” said NMFT President Dr. Britt Dowdy. “We are extremely grateful to learn from these distinguished professionals and their passion to positively influence children,” he said.

NMFT provides the primary sponsorship for this program. Teachers are nominated for this prestigious honor by their peers at each school. From this distinguished group, the top five elementary and top five secondary teachers are selected for classroom observations and interviews by the NMFT Teacher of the Year Committee.

Both Mrs. Wiseman and Mr. Blackie will be submitted for the County selection process. NMUSD has historically fared well. In 2015, Brain Ristow, teacher at TeWinkle, was a finalist at the Orange County level, and Candace Leuthold, teacher at Early College High School, won the Orange County Teacher of the Year Award in 2010.

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